FEMALE MIMICS

Vol. 1 No. 2
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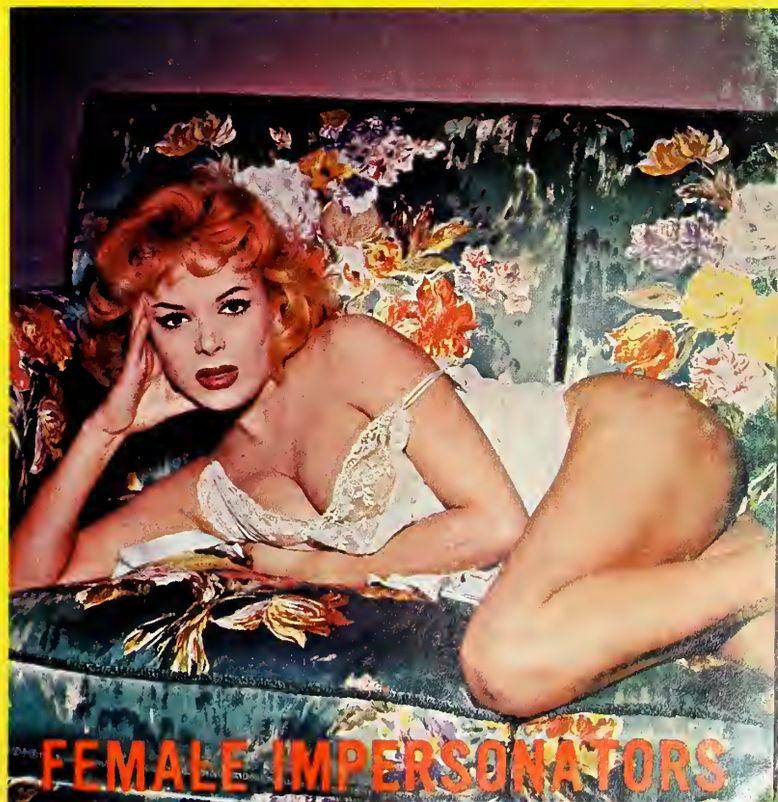
ACME

France's Most Fabulous SHE-MALE

★ ★ ★ COCCINELLE ★ ★ ★



THE WORLD'S FOREMOST FEMALE IMPERSONATORS

FEMALE MIMICS

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COVER: COCCINELLE

COLOR INSERT: HANS

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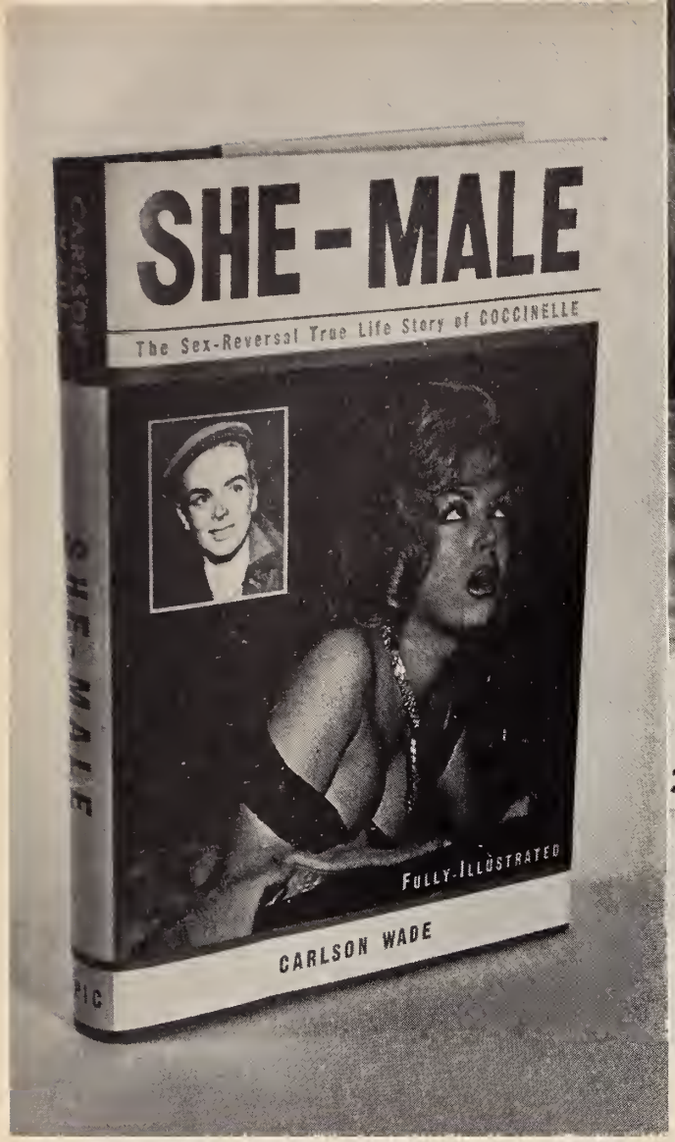
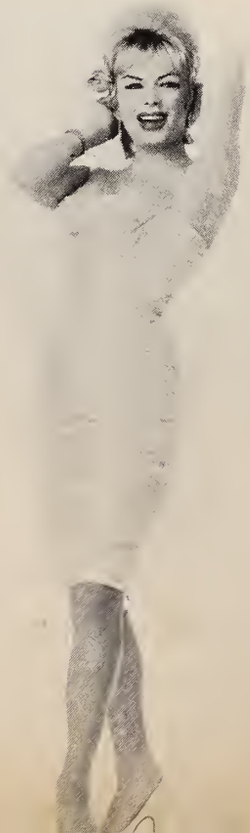


COCCINELLE

In a Penthouse apartment in the Montmarte section of Paris lives one of the world's most glamourous, most beautiful blondes, surrounded by opulent testimonials to success: thick rugs, marble-tiled floors, gold and bronze ornaments, tasteful, expensive paintings. In the ornate bathroom pink towels wear the initial, "C." C is for Coccinelle, France's most famous, most unusual she-male. But the truth is, C could also have been for Charles, for that, in 1935, was how this beautiful, utterly female creature was born — Charles Dufresnoy. Or Jacques Charles Dufresnoy to be exact. From the beginning the little Dufresnoy boy was not like the other boys. He was beautiful, delicately so. He liked to play with dolls. His companions were girls; boys were too rough and boisterous for him. His parents even dressed him like a girl. It was only natural that Jacques should grow up confused, awkward — and lonely. As he grew older, into his teens, his "difference" was more noticeable, the taunts of the other boys more scathing, his confusion deeper. At 15 his feet stopped growing, but his hair grew long and soft. His walk was delicate, his voice high-pitched. He left school at 16, worked briefly as a hairdresser, then as a switchboard operator. By this time Jacques had already delighted himself with dressing as a woman, acting, as the French called it, as a *travesti.* At 18 a friend persuaded him to audition for Monsieur Marcel of the famous Chez Madame Arthur, a



COCCINELLE

club that specialized in female impersonator shows. This was the turning point in Jacques Charles Dufresnoy's life. That first night at Madame Arthur's, in the dressing room, Jacques noticed a little insect on his sleeve. It was a ladybird. In French, *coccinelle.* And so a new personality was born that night.

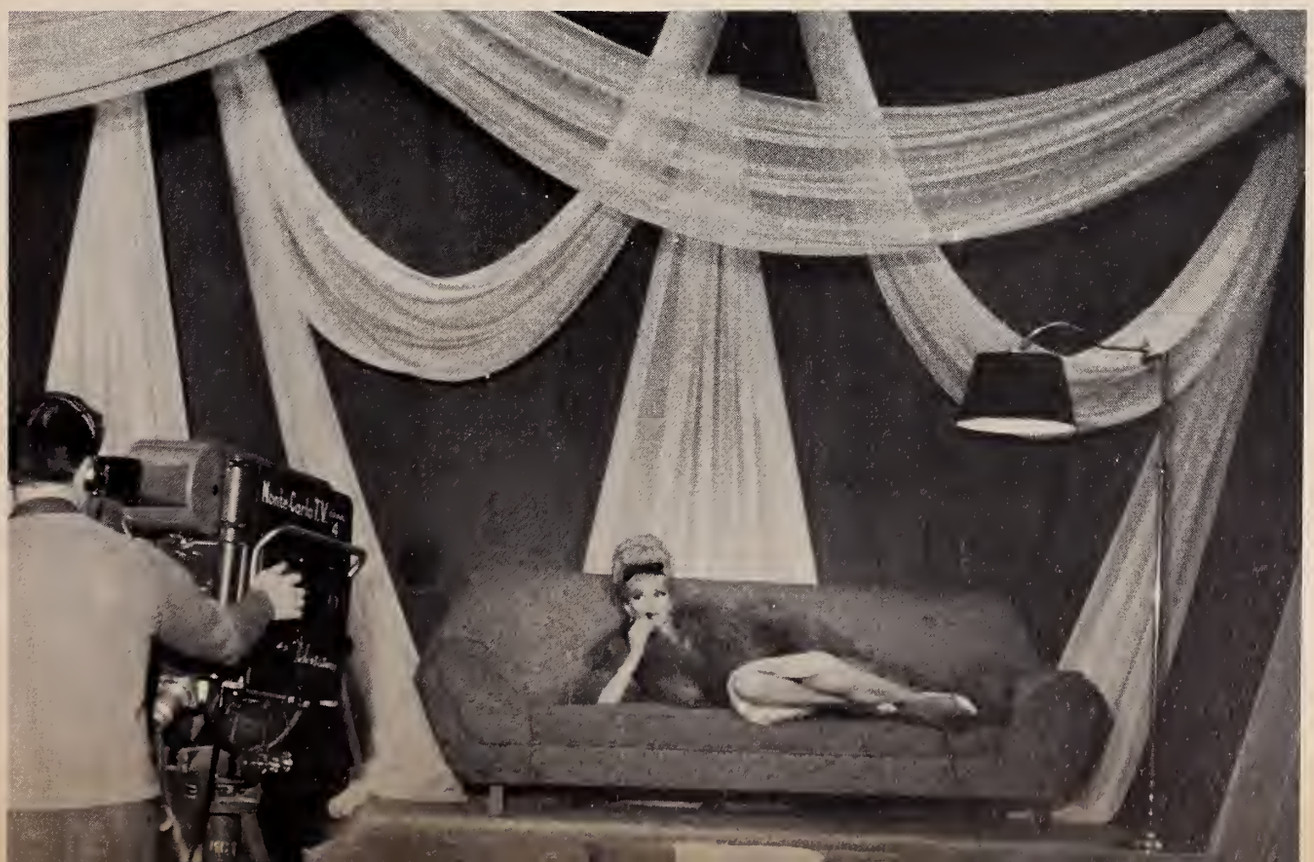
From Madame Arthur's Coccinelle went to the Carrousel. Soon the name Coccinelle blazed in lights across the Champs Elysees. As Coccinelle, Jacques Charles Dufresnoy became the most famous *travesti* — female impersonator — in Europe. Dressed in woman's clothes Coccinelle fooled even his own mother, who once passed him in the street without recognition. Coccinelle's mother understood the problem from the beginning. But Monsieur Dufresnoy at first was horrified at his son's female impersonations. Later, as he too began to understand that Nature herself was deciding his son's fate, he relented, in fact became proud to be the father of Coccinelle.

The Ladybird himself, however, was less than completely happy. Famous, earning plenty of money, friend

of many French and American stars, Coccinelle nevertheless felt something missing from life. And this was — to be a complete woman, not just an effeminate looking man. Already taking hormone treatments to increase his femininity, Coccinelle went to a famous European doctor — and, in one of the rarest surgical cases in history, became in fact physically a woman! In 1961 France granted Coccinelle legal status as a woman, and, in 1962, Coccinelle and photographer Francis Bonnet were married.

A lot of mystery still surrounds Coccinelle. Starring to this day at Carrousel as a *travesti,* this most famous she-male in the world draws crowds bigger than ever, who can agree, if on nothing else, that Coccinelle is one of the most beautiful creatures ever seen anywhere.

A full biography, complete with fascinating photos, was written by Carlson Wade and pub-


Monte Carlo TV

COCCINELLE

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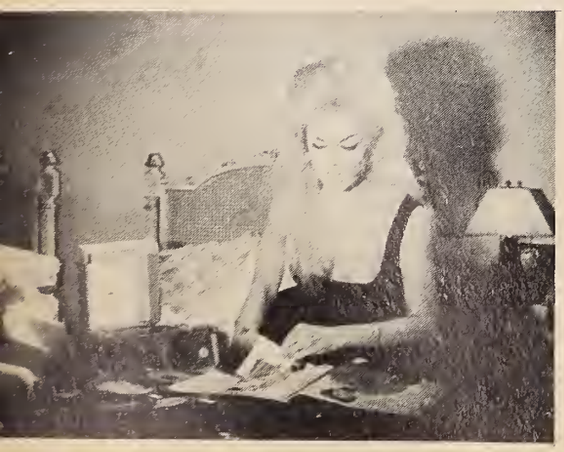


The Beige Room . . .

WHERE MEN ARE WOMEN

WHERE MEN ARE WOMEN

Men aren't always men . . . and women aren't always women, especially at the famed Beige Room in San Francisco. One of the country's liveliest nitespots, it has a show that features female impersonators exclusively. They sing, dance, do

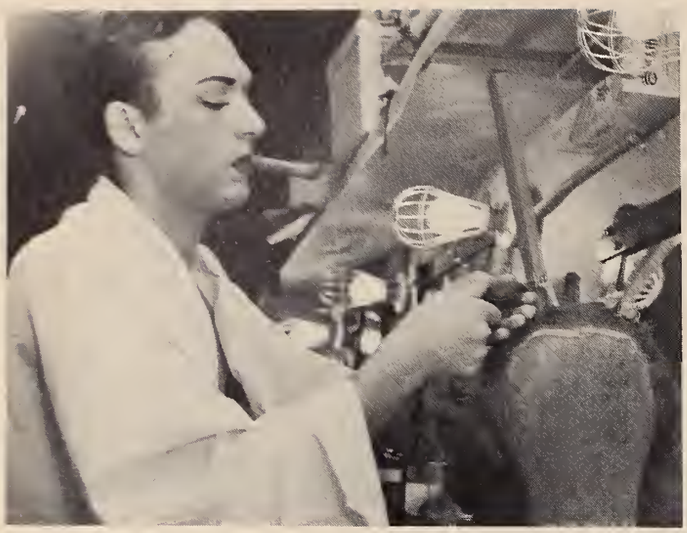
Backstage and on the show floor the guy-gals at The Beige Room are amazing with their good looks and style—not to mention genuine talent. That's star comic Jackie Gordon carrying on in pics left and right. Backstage, in photos at upper left and upper right, Tommy Hendrix (without wig) chats with Don Miles.

comedy routines and all the other jazz that goes into the usual nitespot entertainment fare. The big difference is that, headlined by funny man-woman Jackie Gordon, you've got that great little touch of transvestism!

WHERE MEN ARE WOMEN

Singers with voices a couple of octaves higher than, say Marlene Dietrich's abound at the Beige Room. Below: Don Miles, who adds dancing to his songs.

DARING DUET



Female impersonator Laurie Knight may be, but he still digs man-size cigars.

Except for the obvious one of talent there isn't much difference to be seen from one ballroom dancing duo to the next. Right? Wrong! Harry Weber and Laurie Knight prove it so with amazing regularity at some of the swellest clubs in the U.S. Harry is an ex-Navy middleweight boxer, Laurie is 5'7", 135 lbs., and a female impersonator. With auburn wig, sleek gown and artful make-up, Laurie comes on and sings in the Hildegarde style. Bawdy ballads and musical comedy songs are Laurie's forte, and, teamed with Harry, makes a great dancing duet.

Make-up job is most delicate part of Laurie's female impersonator routine. As a song and dance team Weber and Knight have wowed audiences and critics coast to coast.

Dance routines range from serious ballroom style to spoofs and routines of old-time dances and songs. Here they do Charleston, Apache dance, "Guys and Dolls."

DARING DUET

DARING DUET

Who would guess those shapely legs belong to the cigar?

Madame Arthur's French Fun House

Madame Arthur's crew of female impersonators on stage for the grande finale.

FRENCH FUN HOUSE

Leave it to the French to spice up the world of show business. They've been doing it in their own inimitable style for years, with such clubs as Madame Arthur's, the largest club in Paris featuring female impersonators, and famous, among other things, for giving Coccinelle his debut. At Madame Arthur's the boys in the band are the only boys who look it, the rest of the acts are sveltly gowned, superbly coiffed, and sleekly built. The all-male cast of singers and dancers features such famed names in the transvestite world as "Wanda" Paris and "Fifi" Pervenche.

A person would be hard put to find a better-looking bunch of "girls" anywhere—and these are all boys! At far left is "Wanda" Paris, dancing star. Extreme right "Fifi" Pervenche. Patrons find it hard to believe these are men.

FRENCH FUN HOUSE

Things really get gay at Madame Arthur's, both on stage and backstage, where the boys who will be girls like to relax and let their wigs down between shows. Helping each other with make-up and costume is all part of showbiz comradeship.

Wildest Ball of All

At the Beggars' Ball what goes on– and what comes off– beggars description!

Lee
Orchestra

Ronny

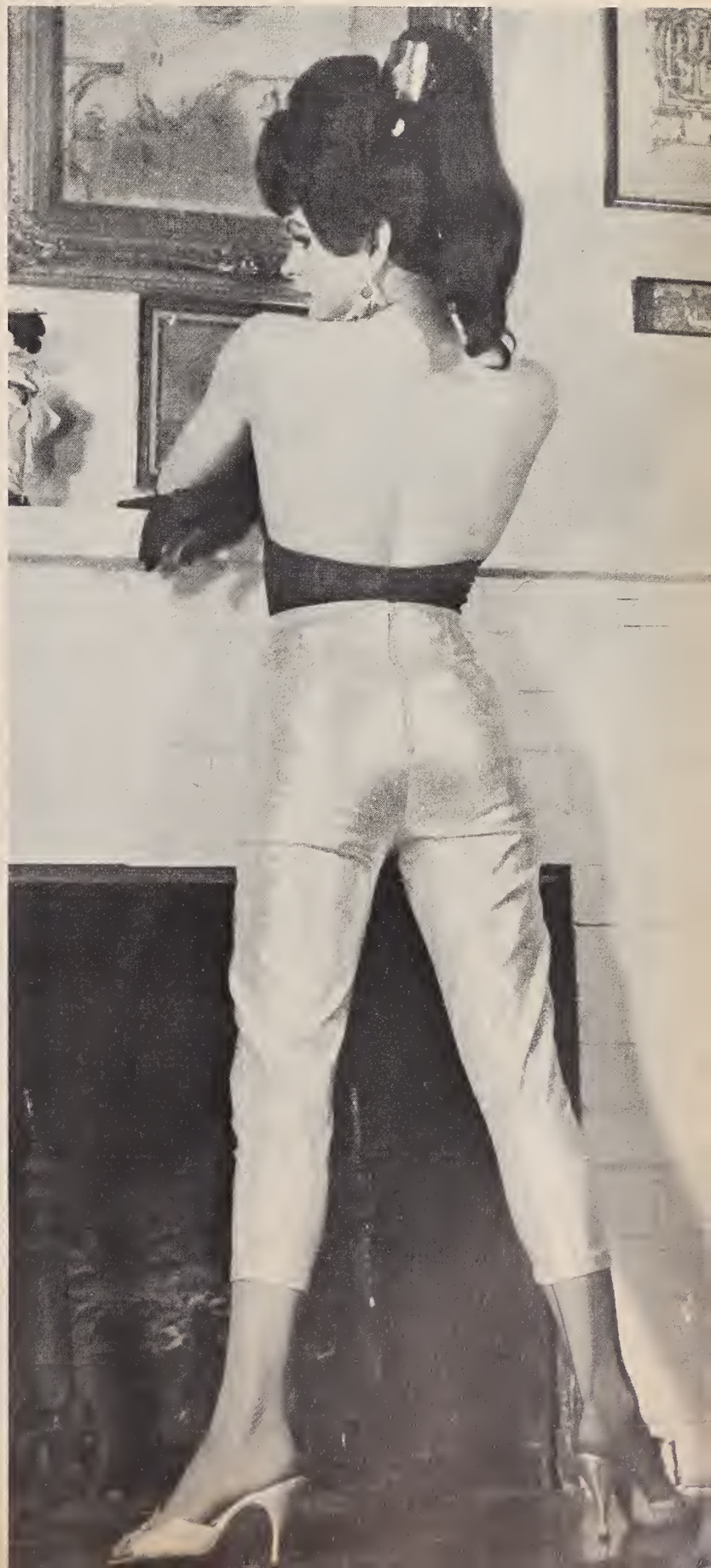
It's an annual costume party to end all costume parties, and a gay event to match anything seen here or on the continent!

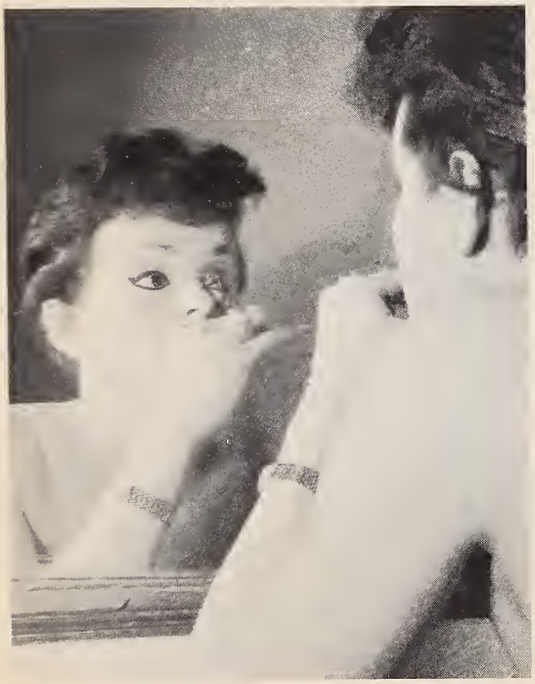
You not only can't tell the partygoers without a scorecard, you can't even tell the boys from the girls—and at this party—who cared?

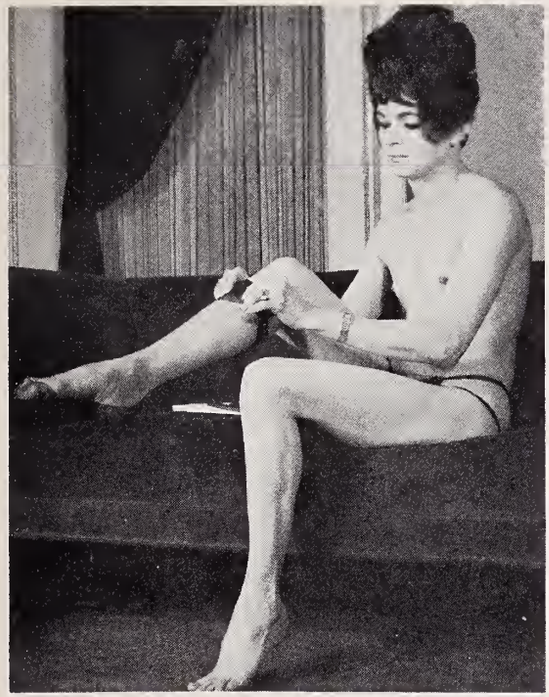
Masks, costumes and make-up caused part of the confusion and madcap antics at the Beggar's Ball, and what they couldn't do—padding did! It took a keen eye and a small costume to tell the real girls from the pretty female impersonators!

HANS ACROSS THE SEA.

From Puerto Rico but with some German heritage, comes Hans, a stunning "artiste," a female impersonator of the highest order, a star coast-to-coast, from the Club 82 in New York to the Beige Room in San Francisco, and headliner at the famous travesti *clubs of Europe. Dark-haired and with features sculpted in the classical Greek line, Hans is considered an epitome of transvestism.*







Here Hans has allowed for the first time our photographer to capture step by step how he transforms himself from a man to a beautiful female. Powder, lip-rouge, eye-lash curler, wig, and then, the filmy underclothes and stockings . . .

Though his slim figure hardly has need of one Hans is fond of wearing a black girdle. His dark good looks, when he is dressed as a woman, have gotten him compared with some Italian film stars.

Hans can sing, with a sexy, low-modulated voice, but his real forte is a strip tease routine that would make many a female stripper hide in a closet. He's got sensational rhythm and mood.

Look Ma! No Hans! Instead its Hanselle! In his tasteful apartment he feels more comfortable in gold lame Capri pants.

Gerry Lee bumps and grinds out an unusual bit of strippery—and that G-string doesn't stand for Girl, either!

BOY OH BOY BURLESK!

As though top strippers like Jennie Lee and Tempest Storm didn't have enough troubles with competition, along comes a challenge from an unexpected quarter—a guy! And the guy—Gerry Lee—not only looks better than many a stripper when he's all dressed up like a gal, he looks better than a lot of 'em when the clothes come off! All of which goes to prove that many a female impersonator has more than just imitating talent going for him—he

has pretty good looks for openers. Like Gerry, for example, who wows patrons regularly in New York's Greenwich Village Clubs, and once in a while takes to the road to give other cities a peek at one of the most provocative dance acts in the world of show business. Here the camera captures some of the transition from male to female as Gerry dons wig and make-up and even tends to a bit of necessary ironing.

BURKE'S LAW

BURKE'S LAW

Like the TV show of the same name, this title too deals with Justice, but this kind is the kind Gene Burke does to his strip act as a top female impersonator. With blonde wig, padded bra, sequined G-string and a body to put many a real gal to shame, Gene trips the light fantastic—and we mean fantastic

in many of the better boites from New York to Frisco. The way Gene can wiggle and jiggle to the beat of that old tom-tom makes audiences rub their eyes in

disbelief when it turns out in the grand finale that Gene's a gorgeous blonde all right — but a guy! It shows you — don't believe anything but the bare facts!

Originating soon after World War II in Miami, Florida, in the Club Jewel Box, the "Jewel Box Revue" has become without doubt the most famous female impersonator extravaganza in the entire world of show business — and that includes Paris's famed Madame Arthur's and Carrousel Clubs. The brain child of Danny Brown, who still is producer of the show, the Jewel Box Revue has played the plushest nightclubs and theaters in the country, the top hotels in Las Vegas, in such posh after-dark places as New York's Town & Country Club. The reason for its success? Listen to Danny Brown talk: "We appeal a lot to the intellectual who can understand this quirk in man's nature. There is a bit of woman in every man, and for the ones who have an overabundance of female genes

— the artists among them take their place in this most entertaining phase of show business. Female impersonation, one must remember," continues Danny, "goes back many years in history. It was always considered one of the finer arts among the Romans and Greeks."

Danny is correct of course. Even Shakespeare originally created the role of Juliet to be played by

Top left, world famous Jackie Maye, in street clothes. Left, Mr. Lynn Carter, famed for his great impersonation of Pearl Bailey. Above: T.C. Jones combs hair of guess who—Jackie Maye!

Impersonators all — but guess which "girl" is really a girl! It's the one at the extreme right. She's Mickey Mercer, and in the Revue she does a male impersonation.

THE JEWEL BOX REVUE

a young MAN, not a woman. In the Elizabethan theatre all young feminine roles were played by young boys. So the Jewel Box Revue is not entirely original — but it is the most lavish, most beautifully done revue of its kind, putting the art of female impersonation on the high plane of dignity where it belongs in show business.

At right it's Jackie Maye on stage. Below, female impersonator Lynn Carter backstage with dog Whitey.

THE
JEWEL
BOX
REVUE

Jackie Maye with some of his fabulous wardrobe, insured for fifty thousand dollars. At page right is Mr. Francis Russel, who emcees the Jewel Box Revue and designs and makes many of the costumes the boys use in the show. Mr. Russel is so good at this work he has been offered many opportunities to design for Hollywood and Broadway stars, but he likes the excitement and fun of working with the Jewel Boxers.

SINGER

DUTCH TREAT

Madame Arthur's Club of Paris has finally become so successful it has a branch, in of all places, Amsterdam. Opened recently in the old part of the city, it has become rapidly popular among the chic Dutch and tourists looking for exotic amusement. As in the French version of Madame Arthur's all the performers are *travesti,* female impersonators. By most nightclub standards the *travesti* of Amsterdam are poorly

Belting out a Dutch ballad is this travesti, a fair sample of impersonator at Madame Arthur's.

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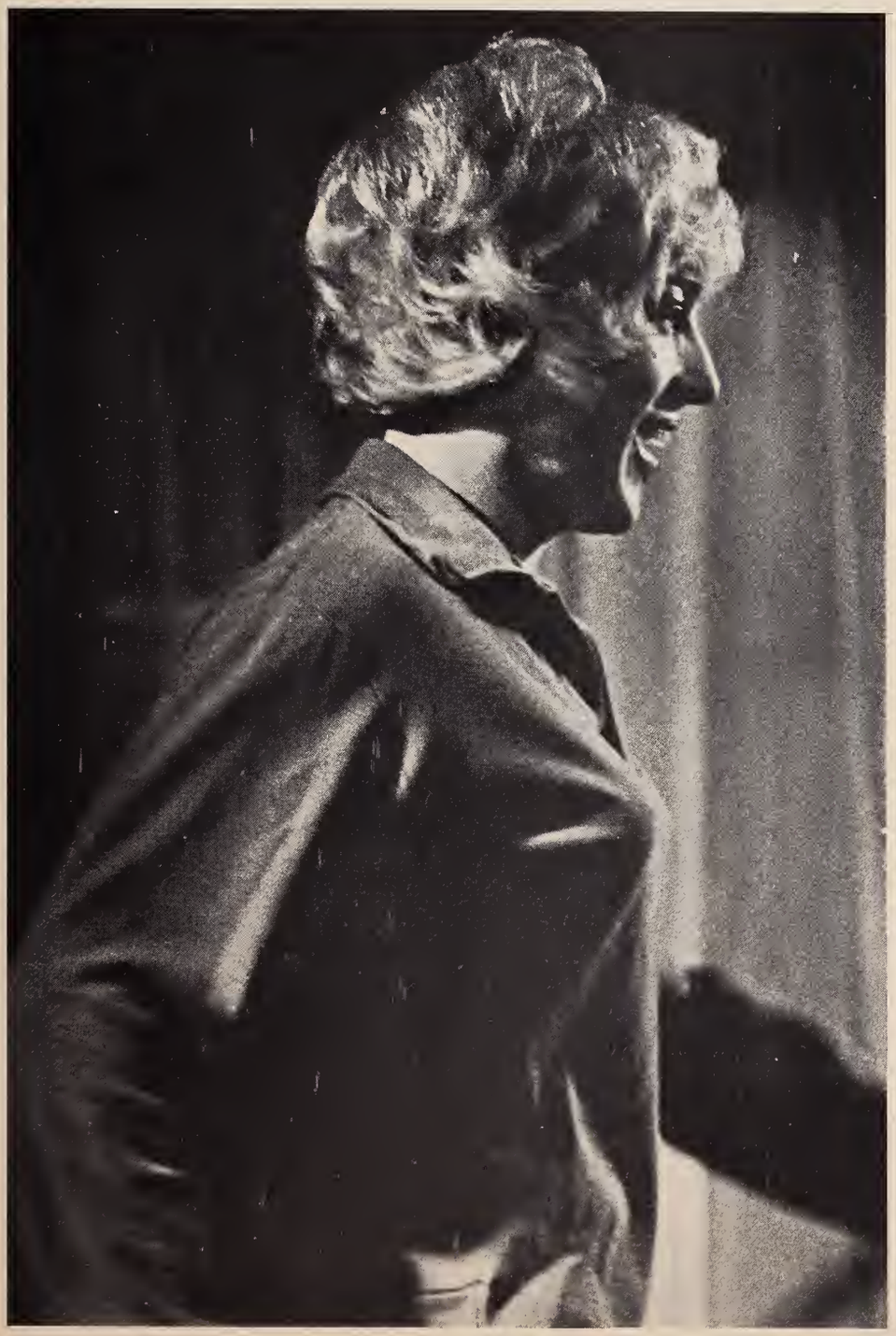

They sing, they dance the American "Twist," they tell Dutch jokes, but most of all they dress and make-up as chic as female impersonators anywhere.

DUTCH TREAT

paid, but for these entertainers it is more a labor of love. They return week after week to perform, many exquisitely gowned, singing and dancing. At times Amsterdam and Paris will exchange *travesti* with each other, but for the most part the show is straight Dutch — but no wooden shoes.

The Amsterdamers were flabbergasted right out of their wooden shoes when they first learned that men like those at top of page were the same ones looking and performing so beautifully in pics above and left. Directly at left, doorman stands by "girlie" display.

The bright neon lights of Madame Arthur's Club add new glitter to the night life of Amsterdam. This first travesti *show is doing so well another show may open in the Dutch city.*

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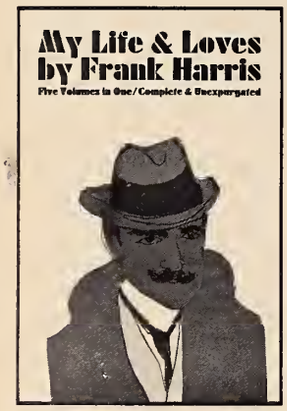

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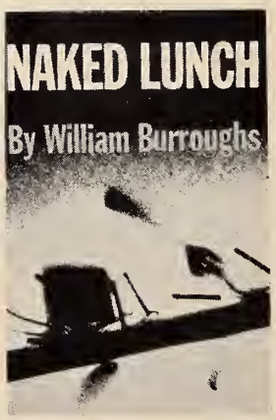

"NAKED LUNCH"

Newsweek
November 26, 1962

As an added complication, the book is as obscene as anything ever written; it had trouble with the U.S. postal authorities in the three years since Burroughs finished it in 1959, the grounds for the trouble, curiously enough, being pornography. The criterion of pornography is that it must excite so-called normal people to lust. Since the only effect "Naked Lunch" will have on anyone's daughter is to make her swear off sex for two years, the charge is nonsense, and has been so recognized.

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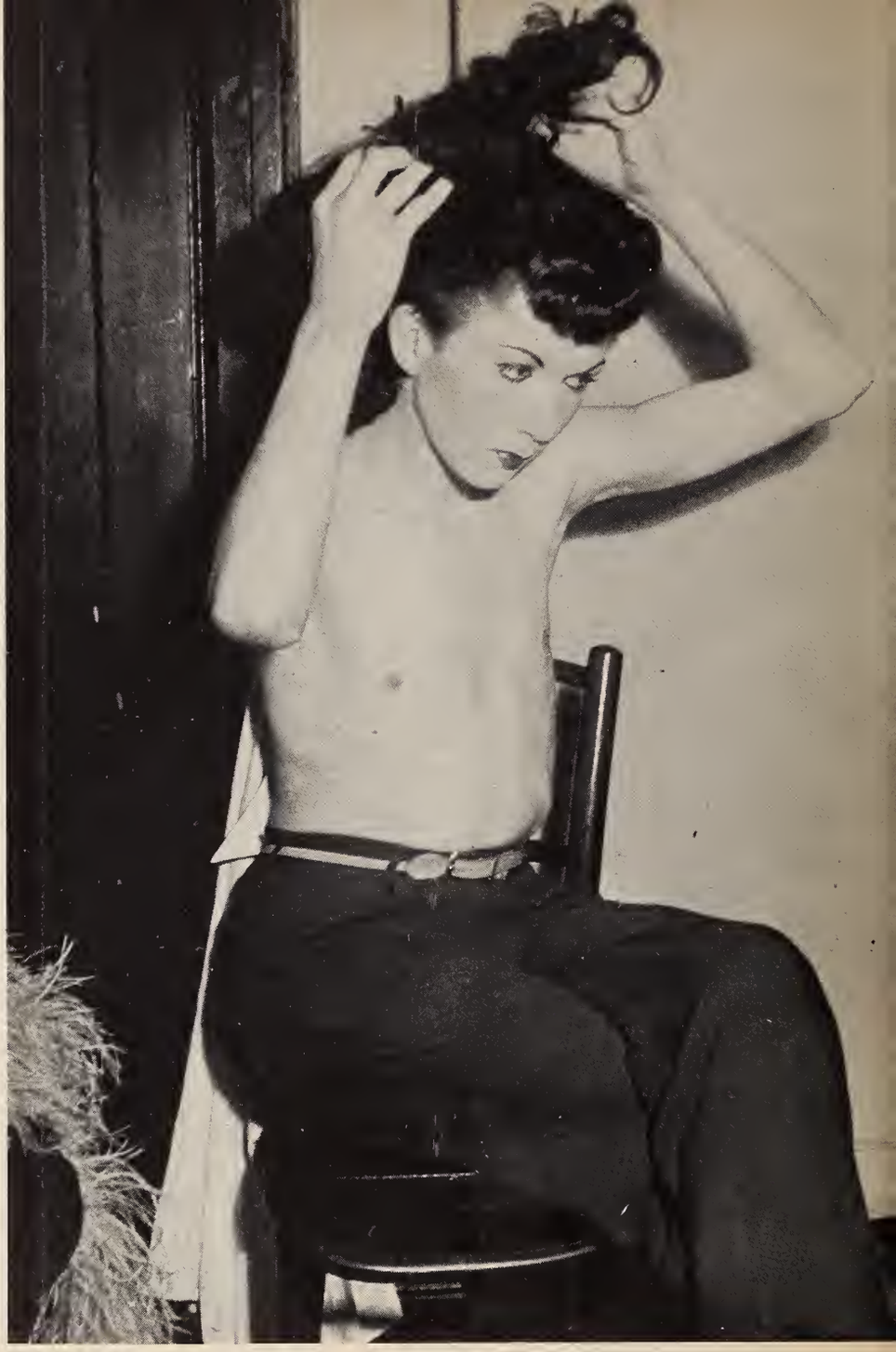

Above: That make-up job of Poppy's would do credit to a Hollywood expert, but note that he also has the features that can take the impersonation successfully. Below, he needs help from falsies, but of course that's something even a girl can often use!

BOY MEETS GIRL

The history and tradition of female impersonation goes back many years in the theatre – to the Greeks, the Romans, Biblical times, and even ancient Chinese lore is full of stories of court favorites who were female impersonators. In this country such as Julian Eitings and currently Francis Renault enjoy widespread fame and success. But it is only fairly recently that female impersonation revues and solo performances have made solid hits throughout the American nightclub circuit. Among those who have helped make this so with great acts is Poppy Smith, dancer and singer of exotic songs.

The wig is in place, completing the facial picture, now it's time for the net stockings and undies.

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"TRANSVESTISM TODAY"

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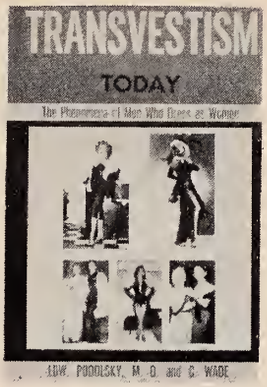

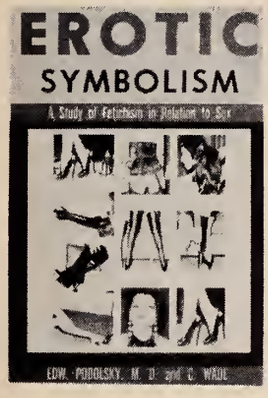

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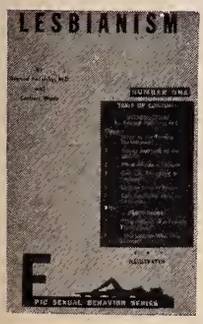

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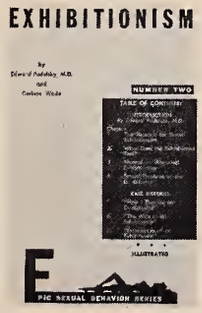

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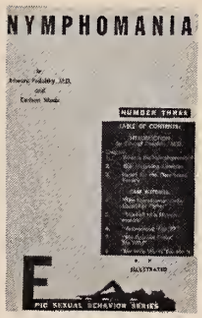

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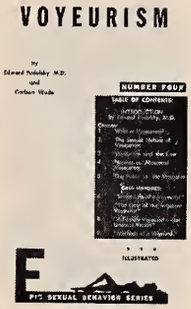

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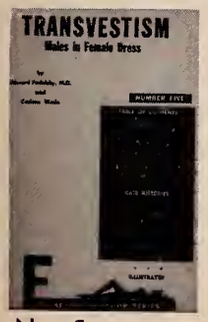

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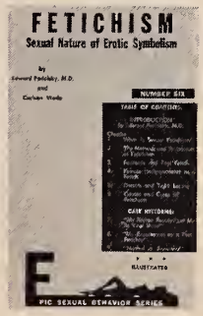

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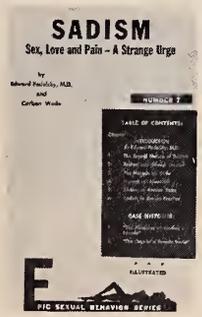

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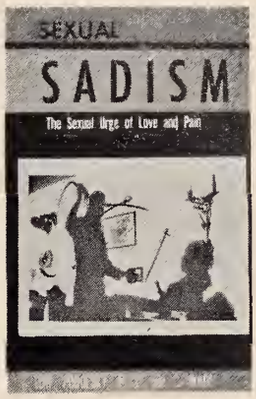

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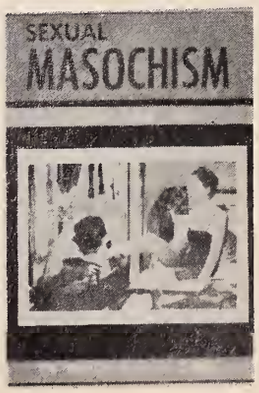

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MEN

At the clubs where he performs Poppy likes to stir a little excitement before the act by heading for the Men's Room (photo at left). Before the mike though he comes on strictly female impersonator, singing with a throaty, sexy voice.